

THE BEACON



A PAPER FOR THE SUNDAY SCHOOL
AND THE HOME



VOLUME I.

SUNDAY, APRIL 2, 1911

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The Gates of Gold.

If you are tempted to reveal
A tale some one to you has told
About another, make it pass,
Before you speak, three gates of Gold.
These narrow gates,—first, "Is it true?"
Then, "Is it needful?" in your mind
Give careful answer, and the next
Is last and narrowst, "Is it kind?"

Men of To-morrow.

For The Beacon.

The Best Joke of the Season.

BY BERTHA BURNHAM BARTLETT.

Prof. Garnet looked sharply at the quintette of boys in the corner where they sat giggling over some mischief or other. There was a glimmer of sympathy behind his spectacles—he had been a boy once himself—but loyalty to school discipline kept him from expressing his sympathy in words. Instead, his voice startled the lads by its crisp questioning:

"No nonsense on hand for to-night, have you, boys? How is it, Jacobs?"

Jacobs shook his head ruefully. "Nothing doing in our crowd, sir, so far as I know—and I rather guess I should know! It doesn't seem like April Fool's, either—not if you can't have some fun. But the old jokes make us sick, so we've cut 'em out. Tried our best to think of some good ones, but gave up the job—Jiminy!—I mean—quit it, Baldwin!"

"Well, I like that!" complained Kid Baldwin in a stage whisper as Larry Jacobs concluded his somewhat broken remarks. Jacobs kicked him, savagely and secretly.

"Bear it like a man," he urged dramatically. "Good of the order, you know, and all that. An idea 'most knocked me over, and I nearly out with it. Keep mum—while I punch you for something."

From his desk Prof. Garnet was an observant spectator. He was supposed to keep the boys of Lennox School from becoming too hilarious during the indoor recreation hour immediately preceding the retiring bell. Because, however, the professor was never disagreeably arbitrary, the boys always enjoyed his official oversight as they did that of no other teacher in the school, while for his part he secretly confessed to a desire to "duff in with the boys for a howling good time."

"It's a cinch," continued Larry in a whisper, when at last he had finished the "punching," which, it must be confessed, Kid Baldwin took with suspiciously lamb-like docility,—"it's a cinch, the idea that came to me while I was telling the prof. that we *hadn't* an idea. I guess it wasn't



A DUTCH BOY—A. CuyP.

a lie,—I'd feel mighty cheap to tell what wasn't straight goods,—but I guess it's all right, don't you?" he asked anxiously. "I tell you when the thing popped plump into my fertile brain!"

"Cut it out!" commanded Harry Butters, authoritatively. "Give us the idea. We don't want flowery speeches, and you didn't say you weren't ever *going* to have an idea."

Larry grinned and grunted. "It's the best ever!" he vouchsafed, chuckling. "Say, boys, it's—it's—you know Crary went home this morning to stay till the 'even o'clock train to-morrow night. Went just because he knew he'd be fooled to the limit if he

stayed here. That's right. But we can fix him up all right, just the same. Sneak downstairs just as soon as the clock strikes twelve to-night, all of you, and we'll beautify that room of his so that he'll never know where he's at when he gets in on the last train. Oh-h!"

In an excess of silent emotion the five boys of the group hugged themselves as they caught the idea.

"We won't do a thing to his pretty room, oh, no, we won't!" they declared ecstatically, albeit softly. "And it won't be laid to us, for—oh, but you're a wonder, Larry Jacobs! Punch the rest of us, Larry, please punch us. You're a public benefactor. Hi!"

"Not *too* much wrestling," cautioned the professor, smilingly, as Larry proceeded to comply with the request as an outlet to his own surcharged feelings. Then the retiring bell rang, and the boys dispersed to their respective rooms, a grin upon their faces which ought to have awakened suspicions in any teacher's mind.

The town clock had scarcely finished striking the midnight hour when five pajama-clad youths stole softly from their rooms, and as soon as possible disappeared within the corner suite occupied by Greatorex Crary, a boy whose mother had foolishly insisted that her son should have more privileges than his mates. In their turn the boys had promptly shown their disapproval of such undemocratic ways by making life almost a burden to the youth, who, as Larry Jacobs had shrewdly suspected, had secured permission to go to his home that last day of March for the sole purpose of escaping the pranks of which he might expect to be the victim on the day which, for centuries, has been gleefully observed by mischievously-disposed persons of the world at large.

To return to "the immortal five," as our five friends elected to be called, we find them, once within the sheltering walls of the suite, engaged in all but silent convulsions of joy as they mentally reviewed the devastation which they were about to cause.

"We've got to work quietly," cautioned Larry when at last he could find his breath: "we've got to work quietly, and we mustn't light up very bright, or the light may leak through some crack. Just enough light so we won't stumble over any of his confounded gimeracks. And, say, if he doesn't think something's busted! Let's take the pictures down first, hey?"

Softly, very softly, the pictures came down and were stacked, face down, upon the large mahogany study table in the centre of the sitting-room. Next the boys set themselves to the task of taking the tacks from the velvet carpet that covered the floor. This was a back-breaking undertaking, but in the interests of the occasion what boy could find it other than a joyous occupation, even though an occasional misplaced tack was now and then sat upon, to the imminent danger of the immediate discovery of the sitter and his companions? Indeed, at such times only the presence of mind of those who were not experiencing the hard pricks of conscience (or tacks!) saved the situation by smothering his groans in convenient blankets.

The bed was next dismantled, blankets being piled in easy chairs, and the bedstead taken to pieces and stood in the corners of the room, after which came the folding of the carpet, and the emptying of closets and bureau drawers. At this juncture, however, the door opened.

"Well, boys?"

It was Prof. Garnet's voice, pleasant as ever, though Larry Jacobs declared afterwards that a gorilla's roar would have sounded pleasanter to him. The professor spoke again as he turned the gas on to its full extent.

"You've done splendidly, boys. I appreciate it, too, only I take exception to Jacobs' statement that you were not planning any fooling: it's what I call a right-down, genuinely good joke—one of the right kind, a thoughtful, helpful one. I'm obliged —what's that, Larry?"

Flanked by his co-laborers Larry mumbled an unintelligible something.

Prof. Garnet continued, his brown eyes suspiciously innocent as he looked from one to the other of the pajama-robed youngsters.

"But before you finish the cleaning of this room, which of course Crary would have thought to attend to had his bringing up been like yours and mine, I must insist that you have some refreshment for the inner man. It has been altogether too long since supper for you to do anything more without something to eat. Yes, Crary changed rooms with me this morning before he left for home. Insisted upon leaving me his carpet, and said he had decided he'd rather have a room like the rest of the fellows. He's a good sort and wants to be one of you. I'm glad to get this suite, too. Now—just set the pictures on the floor, can't you? Miller, won't you get some dishes out of that desk-closet, there, while I make a rarebit? Baldwin, can't you open this can of condensed milk? Horton, if you'll just stir this, I'll make the coffee. Luckily I have one mince pie left from the box of good things my mother sent me a while ago. It's great, this having mothers that remember you like pies when you're away teaching. I'm just a boy, to her way of thinking, if I have been out of college for ten years."

Spellbound, the Immortal Five watched the deft-handed professor. What was it he had said? that it *wasn't* Crary's room that they had thus invaded and torn to pieces? that it was *his*, Prof. Garnet's? And—had their ears deceived them, or did he really intimate that he expected them to do more than they had already done? Jiminy, though! but they would, too. The professor was a brick. Yum-yum; but that coffee smelt good—and the rarebit! Say! The professor must be in the habit of making those things. And that pie!

"There, now!" Prof. Garnet's voice was hospitality personified. "Sit right down, fellows. And, if I'm not deserving of a midnight repast, I suppose you won't really deny me the enjoyment of eating with you workers. Just make yourselves at home, and put all thought of the floor-washing and paint-cleaning that's to follow completely out of your minds until you've disposed of these things."

Floor-washing! Paint-cleaning! Larry Jacobs looked sheepishly around the table, meeting an appreciative answering grin on every face except the professor's. He was evidently too busy helping his guests even to look up.

For half an hour they sat at table; there were nuts to pick out and apples to eat, after the substancials had disappeared, and if, perchance, out of regard for near-by sleepers, the conversation had to be carried on in low tones, this did not impair the really good time which the boys were having. Then, the supper ended, the professor yawned sleepily.

"You'll find cloths and pails in the toilet room, boys. If you'll pardon my making a suggestion, I'd advise cleaning the woodwork before touching the floor: my mother always used to do that first, I remember. I'm sorry I hung the pictures this—or rather, I should say, yesterday—morning, for you wouldn't have had the work of taking them down if I hadn't. Anyhow, they're all dusted, so you'll only have to rehang them. As for the carpet, just put that out in the hall

until morning: of course you couldn't tack it down to-night, even if it were clean, so you can leave that part until after hours this afternoon. You can clean it and then tack it down between dinner and supper, I think. I tell you, this is the best kind of an April joke! Now I'm going to bed. If you don't mind, Baldwin, I'll go to your room. Try not to make too much noise. Good-night. But it does seem almost too bad, though I know you've enjoyed it all; but I'm afraid you will be pretty sleepy to-morrow."

It was Larry Jacobs who rose to the occasion. "We're *glad* to do it for you, professor," he said, kicking vindictively at Miller as that youth gasped at Larry's audacity. "And—I say, professor! I really wasn't lying when I answered you as I did to-night—*last* night. We weren't thinking then what we could do, but afterwards we—*we* happened to, and—we came down soon as the clock struck. We'll have the room spick-and-span by supper time, professor."

"Of all fools," quoth Baldwin, as the door closed behind the teacher, "of all fools we certainly are the fooldest! Say, but isn't he a dandy! Do you suppose he really thinks we've done this for him, or that he knows we had it in for Crary?"

"Crary seems to be different than we thought, too," grumbled Miller as he began to wash the woodwork on the north side of the room. "I—I wonder what he'd say if he knew about this affair."

"He never will know," declared Horton, positively. "The professor won't give us away. Know? Of course he knows. Didn't you see him grin? Bet you, he was one of the boys, fast enough. Say, but he's great!"

"Wish we could give him three cheers and a tiger," announced Larry as he mopped and slopped the floor. "Say, let's make believe we're deaf and dumb, and give him that kind of a cheer. Wave your dishrags, fellows!"

But mop-waving and silent cheers can never satisfy a boy, wherefore it came about that ten or twelve hours later five boys (this time not clad in pajamas, however) electrified passers-by, by giving utterance to the wildest of war-whoops and repeated and thrice-repeated cheers, the while they beat a carpet.

And Crary never knew that, but for his home-going, the biggest April-fool joke of the season would never have been perpetrated; for Butters and Baldwin and Jacobs and Horton and Miller kept their own counsel, you may be sure, while Prof. Garnet—well, Prof. Garnet was a teacher to be proud of and to be depended upon, a man for whom the boys simply had to cheer whenever they had half a chance.

Shall I not work?

Shall it be said: "He took from all the world, Of its accumulated, countless wealth, As much as he could hold, and never gave? Spiritless beggar! pauper! parasite!"

Life is not long enough to let me work As I desire; but all the years shall hold, Shall I pour forth. Perhaps it may be mine To do some deed was never done before, And clear my obligation to the world.

CHARLOTTE PERKINS GILMAN.

The Elm-tree Post-office.

The box fastened to the elm-tree had been a bird's-nest once; but ever since Margery and Rosamund had had Twinkle,—to creep softly through the grass and keep an eye on young and tender nestlings,—Mother and Father Bird had declared it was too near the ground, and had built their nest in the higher branches, safe from his cruel claws.

For two years it had been vacant, then one day Margery had a happy little thought.

"Let's have a post-office," she said to Rosamund.

"But what will be put into it?" inquired Rosamund.

"Letters," answered Margery, "and packages, and lots of things; and we will let Evelyn and Sybil have part of it, too. See! They can crawl through the slot in the fence over there, and it is just a step over the grass to the tree."

"But who will be postmaster," asked Rosamund, "and give out the mail?"

"Each can help herself," answered Margery, "and no one must touch anything that does not belong to her. Come, let's go ask Sybil and Evelyn now."

They danced off across the grass, and through the hole in the fence, and soon all four were busy getting things to put in the post-office.

And such mail as that box held! Letters, notes, packages of all kinds, candies, cakes, and even dolls' clothes, passed through it as the days flew by. Before the children realized it was schooltime and play days were over. Still the box held many treasures, and once Evelyn, for her school composition, wrote a poem about Margery, and dropped it in the elm-tree box.

At last nutting time came; and what fun the children did have before school, and on Saturdays, gathering in the winter's store!

One Saturday Sybil found some extra fine chestnuts, and, hiding them carefully away from the others, after they were safely home again, she stole across the grounds to the elm-tree post-box, and dropped in two little packages for Rosamund and Margery.

It was late that afternoon before the children visited the post-office, and Rosamund gave a little scream as something gray and furry jumped out as she put her hand in. "Oh, see!" she cried, pulling out scraps of paper, some empty nutshells, and a few nuts, "that squirrel is using our post-office to store his nuts in."

"Oh, no!" cried Sybil, running across toward the tree. "I put some chestnuts in there for you and Margery, and he has taken them. Isn't it too bad?"

"No," said Rosamund; stoutly, "not if he was hungry. It has been a hard year for squirrels, my father says. Let's go away and see if he will take the rest. He needs them more than we do, I am very sure."

Sure enough, when they came back half an hour later, squirrel and nuts were gone.

"Do you suppose he will come again?" asked Rosamund.

"Perhaps he will," said Margery. "We might leave something for him and see if he takes it"; and, taking a couple of nuts from her coat pocket, she dropped them into the box.

Next morning they were gone. "Let's put some more in," said Sybil, as they peeped into the empty box. "We will say



OUR CHURCH IN SACO, MAINE.

(See article, page 112.)

he owns a share in our post-office, and leave him mail every day."

So every morning the children dropped in a handful of peanuts, chestnuts, crackers, and even tiny bits of cake, and soon they became accustomed to seeing a gray tail fly as they came to the box, and scramble off as fast as he could go.

Soon Mr. Squirrel did not seem afraid of them, and would sit just out of reach and wait for them to drop in his rations, as well as their own letters or packages, and at last he became so tame he would jump on their shoulders as the goodies fell into the box.

"He calls every day," said Rosamund. "I suppose Mrs. Squirrel and the babies wait for him to bring the mail home to them."

All through the fall and early winter Mr. Squirrel made his daily calls at the post-office; but with the deep snow he disappeared, and the last handful of nuts lay uncalled for.

Then Margery's father made a tight wooden cover to keep out the snow and rain, and the children used it all winter for their holiday surprises.

One day in March Evelyn visited it with her hands full of letters for the patrons of the office; but, as she neared the tree, she almost dropped them all, for there sat Mr. Squirrel waiting for her beside the mailbox.

Evelyn fairly flew home and called the others. "Oh! come quick, come quick!" she cried. "Our squirrel has come back and is waiting for his mail."

Eagerly the children gathered a pile of goodies and ran to the elm-tree post-office. Yes, there sat Mr. Squirrel waiting, as much as to say, "It is a long time since we received any mail at our house, and I have come for it now."

After eating all he could, and storing the rest away in his pouchy cheeks, he was off like the wind, and the children watched him out of sight.

"We must bring him mail every day," said Rosamund. "Let's use it only for his mail and see that he has plenty, not only for the summer, but to put away for the winter. Then he and Mrs. Squirrel will not have to worry about feeding the babies any more."—Emma F. Bush, in *Zion's Herald*.

The Tendril's Faith.

Under the snow in the dark and cold

A pale little tendril was humming:

Sweetly it sang 'neath the frozen mold

Of the beautiful days that were coming.

"How foolish your songs," said a lump of clay.

"What is there, I ask, to prove them?

Just look at these walls between you and the day—

How can you have power to remove them?"

But under the ice and under the snow

The pale little sprout kept singing,

"I cannot tell how, but I know, I know—

I know what the days are bringing.

"Birds and blossoms and buzzing bees,

Blue, blue skies above me:

Bloom on the meadow and buds on the trees,

And the great sun to love me."

Then a pebble spoke up. "You are quite absurd,"

It said, "with your song's insistence:

For I never saw a tree or a bird,

So of course there are none in existence."

But "I know, I know," the tendril cried

In beautiful, sweet unreason,

Till, lo, from its prison, glorified,

It burst in the glad spring season.

ELLA WHEELER WILCOX.

*Self is the only prison that can ever bind the soul;
Love is the only angel who can bid the gates
unroll.*

HENRY VAN DYKE.

For The Beacon.

Seeds and Souls.

BY CHARLES W. CASSON.

Just about this time we are getting out our garden seeds, in preparation for another summer's growing of flowers and vegetables. We are making up our lists of the flowers we are going to have in our gardens this year, and are looking forward to the pleasure they always give us.

The seeds themselves are very insignificant and small. Some of them are as tiny almost as dust. Some are shaped just like little bits of straw. Not one of them looks important enough to be worth anything. There is not the slightest suggestion of life to any of the little seeds that we are cherishing so carefully just now.

But every one of us knows that the seed has within itself the fact and the power of life. We know that the little round, hard ball is, in reality, a flower in disguise, or, rather, a flower imprisoned. It is just waiting until it has a chance to reveal itself and to use the power that lies locked up in its tiny cell.

And so when we look at our packets of seeds, we really see the flowers themselves, and judge the seeds by what the flower will be. If we did not do so, we would not see any value whatsoever in the seeds.

Human beings are just like flowers. Just as the seed has the possibility of greatness and beauty and worth, so the soul of every one of us has the same possibility of greatness and beauty and worth. No one is so low and so insignificant as not to have these larger powers.

Religion is simply the unfolding of these powers. Just as the seed awakens to the fact of its life, so a man suddenly realizes that he has the power to become good and great, as one who has within himself the life of God. Some people call this waking conversion. But it is just the same as though you discovered that the common pebble you had picked up was really a diamond of great worth.

The religion of a seed is just to become what God made it possible to be. It is obedience to the law within and about it that makes it finally the perfect flower. If it were disobedient and refused to grow or to become what nature made it to be, it would then become irreligious.

And the religion of a human soul is just obedience to God and good. We were all meant to be pure, strong, beautiful, loving. There is the power within us to make us what we ought to be. And our religion is simply yielding to the wise spirit of God and the highest desires of our own selves.

There is nothing more perfect than a flower. Put one under the strongest microscope, and you will find no flaws, but only new beauties. How does it become so wonderfully perfect? Is it not by perfect obedience? Who ever heard of a pansy wanting or trying to be a sunflower? Who ever heard of a water-lily wishing to become a rose? Did you ever? Each flower becomes its own best self.

Many people are not nearly as wise as a flower. They wish to become all sorts of impossible persons. They imitate each other and quite forget themselves. How much better would it be if they were as wise as flowers and were true to themselves!

Let us be very careful how we judge the worth of any person who does not seem to

be of much value. Remember that as the black bulb of the water-lily in the slime of the pool can send up the perfect, pure lily, so every one has within himself the power to become good and pure. It is always our duty to help that person to become his best self.

Every Sunday school might be compared to a collection of seeds. Every child has the power to become strong and beautiful. However small the child, there is the chance of greatness, just as the acorn can become the oak. Let each one of us help each other to bloom into beautiful life, and to grow into strength, and to become what the good Gardener of the earth has made it possible for each of us to become.

QUESTION BOX.

Can Unitarian Sunday schools use the Boy Scout idea to advantage?

Yes. The Boy Scout organization as it exists in England, or even in America, may seem to some to have objectionable features. But the fact that in our country the movement is independent of the parent organization in England, and has even broken up into sections, releases us from all obligations to the original society and permits each denomination and each church or school to adapt such parts of the original plan as command themselves and discard the rest.

The fundamental ideas on which the movement is based are such as should appeal to all who believe in "Salvation by Character," for the scouts are systematically trained in accuracy, efficiency, truthfulness, loyalty, and courage. Such patrols, formed in our Sunday schools, may well present exceptional chances to teach a spiritual religion that shall be to the last degree practical. Not only does the Boy Scout idea fit in with our denominational genius, it seems almost identical with it.

The suggestion has been made that the patrols in our Sunday schools may not only camp out for a week or two during the summer, but that groups of such patrols might arrange to camp together. A fuller statement of the proposition, as of this whole question, may be found in the March number of *Word and Work*, which should be in the hands of every Sunday-school officer and teacher.

Our Church in Saco, Me.

We print in this number a picture of the Second Parish Church of Saco, Me., partly because it is a type of our best New England churches, and partly because its pastor, Rev. Arthur B. Whitney, has been mentioned frequently of late in connection with the Boy Scout movement. Mr. Whitney is now withdrawing from this church to take up a pastorate in Plymouth, Mass. The change will be a great loss to Saco, though a gain to the church of the Pilgrims.

The successful leaders of men have always been psychologists, whether consciously or not. The essence of psychology is insight into the workings of other men's minds—and such insight has marked all great orators, teachers, and organizers.

PRESIDENT W. H. P. FAUNCE.

RECREATION CORNER.

The Beacon:

Dear Sirs,—I am a little girl eleven years old, and my one delight of Sunday evenings is working out your puzzles. I love to read the sweet and interesting stories, too. I go to the Unitarian church and Sunday school in Cincinnati, and every Sunday *The Beacon* is given away. Our minister is Mr. George Thayer. I am sending you the answers I got from to-day's paper, and I hope to see my puzzles I sent a week or two ago in your paper, and also the one I send to-day. I am very glad my puzzles are good enough to be published. Hoping to see my name in print, I remain

Yours truly,

DOROTHY MAY OWENS.

SUNDAY, March 6, 1911.

DOUBLE ACROSTIC.

There are thirteen words of six letters each. When placed under each other, the *primals* spell the name of a very noted music composer, and the *finals* the name of a Unitarian minister.

1. Propelling a boat.
2. A drug.
3. A bird.
4. A tool.
5. Pointing.
6. A flounce.
7. A woman escort.
8. A nut.
9. A hiding place.
10. A kind of fowl.
11. Almost.
12. To come out.
13. A register.

DOROTHY MAY OWENS.

ENIGMA XXXII.

I am composed of 15 letters.
My 1, 4, 11, 9, is a beautiful flower.
My 5, 8, 11, 15, is a useful mineral.
My 9, 13, 3, is a pronoun.
My 14, 2, 15, 6, 11, is complete.
My 8, 7, 9, is a girl's name.
My 6, 4, 7, is to endeavor.
My 10, 12, 14, is a household pet.
My whole is a noted author.

MARION G. SMALL.

ENIGMA XXXIII.

I am composed of 10 letters.
My 7, 5, 2, 9, 4, is part of the body.
My 3, 5, 10, is a number.
My 1, 8, 6, 10, is an early part of the day.
My whole is a noted mountain peak in Europe.

HEDWIG M. FALLER.

ANSWERS TO PUZZLES IN NO. 25.

ENIGMA XXIX.—Helena Modjeska.

ENIGMA XXX.—Thomas Jefferson.

MYTHOLOGICAL PUZZLE.

M	A	R	S
I	D	O	
J	U	N	O
N	I	K	E
H	E	R	A
O	V	I	D
A	R	E	S

THE BEACON.

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